

2012

Review of: Carlos Gómez-Centurión Jiménez ,
Alhajas Para Soberanos: Los animales reales en el siglo XVIII: De las leoneras a las mascotas de cámara

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Recommended Citation

Tueller, James B. (2012) "Review of: Carlos Gómez-Centurión Jiménez , *Alhajas Para Soberanos: Los animales reales en el siglo XVIII: De las leoneras a las mascotas de cámara*," *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies*: Vol. 37 : Iss. 1 , Article 18.
<https://doi.org/10.26431/0739-182X.1098>
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.asphs.net/bsphs/vol37/iss1/18>

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Gómez-Centurión Jiménez, Carlos. *Alhajas Para Soberanos: Los animales reales en el siglo XVIII: De las leoneras a las mascotas de cámara*. Spain: Junta de Castilla y León, Consejería de Cultura y Turismo, 2011. 447 pp.

This delightful book by Carlos Gómez-Centurión Jiménez began as an article about the parrots of Charles III and then expanded into seventeen chapters about the parrots, lions, elephants, camels, cows, goats, birds, fish, dogs, monkeys, deer and much more. There were cats in the Royal household, but Gómez-Centurión explains that they were not pets. Cats stayed outside and hunted mice. Because of the tidbits like the cats, I highly recommend the book for its expertise in the field of animal studies and because of the author's research, breadth, and style. The author read widely and well. The work, especially in the Archivo General de Palacio, impresses because of its focus on animals.

The book examines much more than royal creatures. It introduces us to the lives of the monarchs who lived with the animals. Most of the examples focus on Queen Isabel de Farnesio, second wife of Philip V and their second son, Charles III. When widowed, Isabel lived in the Royal Palace at San Ildefonso for six years before her death. It took thirty-two workers to transport her pets – birds, dogs, monkeys and ferrets. And Charles III liked dogs. When he died, his son Charles IV eliminated the budget for 243 dogs in the king's personal expenses. Not all those dogs lived in the palace, but at least one – named Melampus – ate dinner with the king, pounced on the waiters and begged for pastries. Plus, Charles III had the constant companionship of his parrots.

Charles III had one great whim. He wanted an elephant as a symbol of firmness, power, wealth, and prestige. The Governor General of the Philippines negotiated a gift of elephants from the nawab of Carnatic and the nawab of Mysore. One elephant was too large to transport to Manila, Mexico, and Madrid, so the ambassador had to ask for a smaller one. It took three years for the elephant in Manila to finally arrive in Spain in 1779. It eventually went directly to Spain, rather than across the Pacific. Meanwhile, the second nawab had already sent a male elephant and seventeen attendants via the Cape of Good Hope, arriving in Cádiz in 1773. Budget for the elephant included four pounds of rice a day mixed with two pounds of sugar and a quart of liquor. In 1777, the first elephant had a fit of rage and died of injuries. The whims of Charles III were difficult to fulfill.

Gómez-Centurión explains that the exotic animals fit into the eighteenth-century context of deism and order. The title of “ornaments for sovereigns” indicates a European conception of monarchy. For example, palace officials recommended that no more animals be sent from North Africa because it cost too much. Nevertheless, the subjects of Ceuta and Orán did not stop. The king deserved such honor. In 1776, residents of Buenos Aires, for example, successfully shipped an anteater to Madrid. Charles III viewed the animal in his rooms and ordered Rafael Mengs to paint a portrait. The anteater died after seven months in Madrid.

Gómez-Centurión concludes with a reflection on our changing relationship with animals. He argues that our treatment of animals influences the modern values of a civilized citizen. The conception of monarchs, he believes, started the connection, especially their overflowing clemency and compassion for their subjects or their animals. In contrast a merciless king brought woe to his subjects, like the contemporaries of Fernando VII noted. He rejoiced, they wrote, in killing the birds that fell into his hands. Exemplary monarchs, in contrast, acted mercifully towards their animals, personifying new attitudes for others to emulate.

Readers will benefit from an increased knowledge of animal vocabulary. I learned that an *agamí* is a grey-winged trumpeter bird, native to tropical South America, and the etymology of pheasant. Pheasants were named after the Phasis River, which the mythical Jason and the Argonauts brought back. I learned that a *garduña* is a marten and that a marten is in the same animal family as a weasel (Mustelidae). I appreciated learning more about fish like carp, barbs, pike, and tench. Birds like mimids, nightingales, canaries, thrushes, finches, larks, pigeons, and linnets appear in the chapters. I even learned more about dogs, like bloodhounds, whippets, greyhounds, pharaoh hounds, old Spanish pointers and Spanish mastiffs.

Sadly, although only fifty-three years old, Gómez-Centurión died in December 2011 just a few weeks after the book was published. Despite the loss, we can continue to enjoy his many books and articles on Bourbon Spain, Elizabethan England, and the Spanish Monarchy in the modern world. Indeed, his study of animals at the royal court merits becoming a classic that any future author of animal studies will need to consult. We are blessed to learn from his work in this enjoyable history, *Alhajas Para Soberanos*.

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